



The Cooperation between Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University

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THESIS

Abstract

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Abstract			
<p>The aim of this thesis was to find out how to renew the double degree of Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University and listed some advantages and disadvantages of a cooperation project. Also the relevant responsible people were interviewed to get the reasons for the termination of this cooperation. The two universities signed the agreement of university cooperation projects in 2005 and the first group students went to Savonia in 2008. The contents of cooperation were always in imperfect teacher exchanges, student exchange, and double degree study. It also introduced the history and development of two university cooperation as well as used questionnaire and SWOT analysis to proof which need to improve and what are cooperation advantages. In addition, the university curriculum, teaching, the situation of Chinese students in Finland and the Chinese universities teaching style has indicated that the two universities have taken a solid first step in academic exchange.</p> <p>All in all, it has been a successful cooperation for both sides, which has enhanced the quality of education as well as cultivated so much graduated students. Now Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University has a perfect international office as well as rich relative information. Both universities got some experiences from this cooperation and found some new partners to continue international cooperation.</p>			
Keywords			
International cooperation, double degree, mechanical engineer, industrial management			

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
2	THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSITY COOPERATION	6
2.1	Transnational Cooperation	6
2.2	Comprehensive Cooperation	6
2.3	Cooperative Mode	7
3	THE COOPERATION BETWEEN SAVONIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND WEST ANHUI UNIVERSITY	8
3.1	The Process of Cooperation	8
3.2	The History of Industrial Management in Savonia University of Applied Sciences	10
3.3	The History of Mechanical Engineering in West Anhui University.....	12
3.4	The Development of Industrial Management in Savonia University of Applied Sciences	14
3.5	Development Status of Double Degree Project.....	14
3.6	Comparison between Industrial Management and Mechanical Engineering	15
3.7	The Development of Mechanical Engineering in West Anhui University....	17
3.8	The Reasons for Picking the Two Programs for Cooperation.....	17
4	QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE COOPERATION	19
4.1	Purpose of the Questionnaire	19
4.2	Results of the Questionnaire.....	19
4.3	Analysis of the Questionnaire	21
5	SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE COOPERATION OF DOUBLE DEGREE	26
5.1	Strengths of Double Degree Cooperation	26
5.2	Weaknesses of Double Degree Cooperation	27

5.3	Opportunities for Double Degree Cooperation.....	28
5.4	Threats of Double Degree Cooperation.....	28
6	CONCLUSION	29
6.1	The Reasons to the Termination of Double-Degree Project.....	29
6.2	The Characteristics of the Double Degree Project.....	29
6.3	Double Degree Project Compared with Other Universities	30
6.4	Succeed in Double Degree Project.....	30
7	SUMMARY	32
	REFERENCES.....	33

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the double-degree has been popular among universities and students. It is the benefit of international development. Besides, cultural exchanges among the process need more improvement to achieve the high-quality education. This final thesis work analyses the cooperation of the double-degree project between Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University later and some valuable suggestions are provided. The significance of this cooperation was to provide a better education for students as well as to strengthen the relationship between China and Finland in the education field.

Authors interviewed some relevant people who are responsible for double degree cooperation between Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University and collected some materials of cooperation information as well as asked their attitude of double degree cooperation.

The authors also set up the questionnaire form on the Google. Students were able to fill in this questionnaire and notice Savonia University of Applied Sciences. The problems of studying abroad include living expenses and study plan etc.

After that, authors found some other schools' cooperation experiences and the advantages and disadvantages of the cooperation by comparing with Savonia and West Anhui double degree cooperation.

The authors listed the history of both universities and used SWOT analysis to give some suggestion to continuous to improve.

2 THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSITY COOPERATION

University cooperation refers to two or more colleges and universities cooperating with each other in teaching, research and community services and other activities, so as to achieve a certain purpose running through joint education and effort.

Obviously, the cooperation means that two universities have built a relationship in opening a double-degree project in a specific major. Among the various partners, cooperative education always maintains the school's independent identity and status.

Forms of international cooperation tend to be diversified. One-way communication between students from two countries has changed into two-way communication. In spite of one-line communication between two colleges and universities and alliances formed among numerous schools, they both provide chances for students to choose. Educational resources can be shared from overseas studying to distance learning. Moreover, exchange programs are various, including short-term exchange (exchange in winter and summer vacations), learning for double academic degrees, exchange teachers, and collaboration of paper projects. According to the international cooperation period, objective and the model, it is not difficult to find out what is the form of the cooperation. (Zhang Endong, 2006)

2.1 Transnational Cooperation

We divide the objective of the cooperation into transnational cooperation and national inter-school interscholastic cooperation. The former is cooperation with non-EU universities while the latter refers to cooperation with domestic universities. It is important for all universities or other foreign universities to have international cooperation.

2.2 Comprehensive Cooperation

According to the content of cooperation, it can be divided into comprehensive cooperation and local cooperation. Cooperation between the universities is comprehensive cooperation projects. In general, it can be a research project cooperation, such

as the double-degree cooperation like let Savonia's teacher exchange to West Anhui University. Besides, students across the world attend multiple education classes as well as finish the recognition of credits to get diploma or certification. (Kaiyong, 2004)

2.3 Cooperative Mode

Two types of cooperation models are included: one is one-line joint paradigm between universities, and the other is circulation plan. A new efficient cooperation model among countries could be formed in which numerous universities unite, interweave with one another and then blend. Intercollegiate cooperation means the cooperation among two or more colleges and universities. The school has more cooperation on the development of the Union. Besides, cooperation between the two schools' referred to herein as individual cooperation.

European countries have the cultural environment and regulations in common. It is prompted that the European countries focus on student exchange. There is a unique school system of higher education in European, which is similar to a kind of federal system. (The Claremont Colleges, 2015)

3 THE COOPERATION BETWEEN SAVONIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND WEST ANHUI UNIVERSITY

The cooperation between West Anhui and Savonia started in 2004 when the town of Varkaus and the city of West Anhui University made the twin town agreement. The mayor with the delegates visited each other. It also followed that Savonia and West Anhui established the double degree program with each other. (West Anhui University, 2013)

Savonia and West Anhui took 2+2 joint educational model, which means that students study in China for necessary professional study for about two years and pass the language test. Then they finished in Finland curriculum study for two years to get enough credits to graduate. After the academic qualification, the student can get Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University degree and diploma simultaneously. Usually, it is called double degree cooperation.

3.1 The Process of Cooperation

In 2005, Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University signed a 2+2 cooperative agreements. The first cooperation program was an international business, only business administration. After the delegation of Savonia, West Anhui decided to make some improvements in the agreement in 2005 and extended the cooperation to three programs, international business, industrial management and information technology. The industrial management 2+2 project was added afterward, West Anhui University also offered a set of related curriculum for this cooperation including the experimental curriculum of industrial management.

Meanwhile, West Anhui University organized the first preparatory classes, a total of 15 students. After two years of studies, in January of 2008, the students came to Savonia University of Applied Sciences to study industrial management for two years.

In 2006, the second preparatory class was founded, a total of 17 people. They came to Varkaus in September of 2008, specializing in international business and industrial management for their double degree studies.

In 2007, West Anhui University set up the third matriculation classes, a total of 14 people. In September 2009, they came to Varkaus campus, majoring in international business.

In 2008, West Anhui University is fourth preparatory classes had a total of 18 people. They came to Finland in September 2010, specializing in international business.

To consolidate the cooperation outcome of the two universities as well as enhance the further expansion the scope of cooperation, Savonia and West Anhui University have set up the mission for the research and communication during the cooperation. They discussed series of specific issues of professional cooperation, exchange of teachers and student exchange with the idea to promote the cooperative education to be more scientific and rational.

From 2005 to 2012, 155 students have participated in the double degree cooperation. Meanwhile, Savonia University of Applied Sciences sent leaders, teachers with 18 people to visit West Anhui University. This group was composed in Savonia for the West Anhui University project. It is mainly in charge of assessing the teaching quality, teaching methods and curriculum setting in West Anhui University.

In the autumn of 2014, Savonia University of Applied Sciences planned to receive 57 students from West Anhui University based on the agreement of both sides. It was the final cooperation between two universities. There were many problems in the process of cooperation and the cooperation agreement was terminated in the year 2014. International coordinator Tuula Linnas ¹ of Savonia University of Applied Sciences provides the statistics. (West Anhui University, 2011)

¹ Tuula Linnas, she is International Coordinator (including incoming business students), Savonia University of Applied Sciences. E-mail interview. Date: 6.10.2015.

TABLE1.The number of double degree students from 2008 to 2014

	Field of double-degree study		
	Industrial Management	International technology	International business
Cooperate time			
1.2008	15	0	0
9.2008	8	0	7
9.2009	0	0	14
9.2010	0	0	18
9.2011	18	15	18
9.2012	21	16	20
9.2013	17	15	10
9.2014	14	0	0
Total	93	46	57

The table shows the student numbers of double degree project for three different programs, industrial management, international business and information technology from 2008 to 2014. It is easy to find that international business and industrial management are more attractive to students.

3.2 The History of Industrial Management in Savonia University of Applied Sciences

The industrial management is a major of the engineering college, during the cooperation with West Anhui University. Students are required to finish 240 credits within four

years, and then they can get the official diploma from Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University.

Savonia University of Applied Sciences was established in 1992; campuses are located in Kuopio, Iisalmi and Varkaus. It is one of the largest universities of applied sciences in Finland and the students graduate from six different fields of study. (Annual report 2014, 2015)

There are 6500 students (including 300 international students), 600 employees and 30 degree programs at Savonia. School launched the program of open innovation space, which is a combination of learning, development, research, and teaching.

Till now, Savonia University of Applied Sciences has cooperated with over universities from over 30 countries. Besides, it is obvious that Savonia has different cultures in one international class as students are from 20 different nationalities.

Double degrees programmes offer the students the opportunity to study as a full-time student for two years. After getting enough credits, they can choose whether to continue studying for master's degree to another field or seeking for a job.

It is also flexible in the open University of Applied Sciences, which means that open-student who has got 60 credits from Savonia already, can get the official certificate from the student office rather than an official diploma.

In recent decades, students have got a lot of useful information from the internet and libraries in universities can also provide students with valuable study materials. Surely, students have to pay for the books and the living costs. Before coming to Finland to study, international students from some Asia countries have to master basic language skills and pass an entrance examination in relevant language tests.

Industrial management was replaced by mechanical engineering, which made the engineer companies stronger in Finland. A mechanical engineer specialized in industrial management often works with and between a wide variety of organizations and entities. (Introducing the industrial management, 2016)

Meanwhile, students from this program can get the chance for practical study in those companies and can thus apply the knowledge of manufacturing technology, supply chains, project management, and the business markets issues into practice, which can also contribute to the improvement of their future study.

3.3 The History of Mechanical Engineering in West Anhui University

There are 54 teachers and 53 part-time teachers in Mechanical and Electronic Engineering College. Among which, 15 of them have the title of the senior professional post, 30 titles of the middle professional post, 32 doctors and masters, and 15 doctor's and master's candidates. Teachers in West Anhui University have got many achievements. Many papers have been retrieved information in authoritative institutions like SCI and American Mathematical Reviews. They have got four national patents for invention and two provincial technology awards. (West Anhui University, n.d.)

Among them, the electronic information science and technology was referred to as the characteristic specialty construction of Anhui province in 2008 and was named as national characteristic specialty construction. In 2010, the application-oriented alliance collaboration of universities of West Anhui occupied a leading role in Anhui province.

Mechanical engineering and automation were considered "The Demonstration Application of Professionals' Projects in the West Anhui Universities". In 2010, the cooperation with Savonia University of Applied Sciences was named as the characteristic specialty cooperative education enrollment.

The college has electronic engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical and mechanical engineering laboratories, a research institute and an engineering training center. Two laboratories focus on modern communication, high-frequency electronics, power electronics, non-power measurement, household appliances, electronic design automation, programmable logic controller, mechanical design, mechanical principles, hydraulic transmission, modern manufacturing technology, metal material and heat treatment, tolerances and measurements, as well as computer aided design.

Education practice base is 2,700 squares, workshop bears the amount of 66 professional courses of experimental teaching tasks, and opens more than 380 trials, most of them were used in the electrical test. West Anhui University installs 1260 sets of laboratory equipment and a training center which used in engineering skills. Totally costs about 120 million euros. (West Anhui University, 2012)

Based on this data and research materials, we can easily find that the professional cooperation is a wide decision as it can take full advantage of engineers rationality and knowledge.

According to the learning from the educational philosophy and experience of an advanced university, the introduction of world-class universities and institutions discipline, or the introduction of high-quality educational resources with distinct characteristics can fill the national and local blank fields and discipline professionals are greatly needed.

3.3.1 Double Degree Cooperation of Two Universities

Under the new situation of higher education by leaps and bounds, to speed up the process of double degree cooperation, meet the demands of some students about studying different countries' cultures, Savonia University of Applied Sciences and the West Anhui University entered a joint undergraduate school agreement in 2005. (West Anhui University, 2014)

At the end of 2014, the cooperation of Savonia industrial management and mechanical engineering was terminated by the university leaders, after considering the employment situation and cooperation regulations of the school.

Schools originally provide language training and professional courses and are preparing for industrial management studies, such as computer aided design, logistics, and supply chain management.

The cooperative education agreement was signed between Savonia and West Anhui. West Anhui needs to provide both Chinese text and English language text. Also, the English version ensures there is no legal loophole.

Teaching plans need to be developed with detailed disciplines, teaching school curriculum system, the choice of teaching materials, faculty, enrollment management, assessment and teaching situations. It is important to ensure that students adapt to the studying environment to maximize their learning potential.

The school needs to arrange official entrance examination, then screen results and lastly select the suitable students to join the studies in Savonia University of Applied Sciences.

Before travelling to Finland students need to prepare their documents like embassy certificate, visa, accommodation and financial support.

Freshmen welcome ceremony was held to help new students become familiar with the Finnish campus, teaching facilities, distribution and timetable arrangements, so that they can have a sense of belonging, and are willing to adjust to an unfamiliar environment.

By the end of the semester, teachers analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each student, collect the lesson feedback from students, improve their teaching skills accordingly forum answers with students. Students whose credits and school performance meet the standards of graduation can obtain bachelor's degree. The school's aim is to ensure students' achievement.

As students graduate from school, they can give final feedback about their studies, so that the next-generation students can have a better education. The feedback promotes sustainable development.

3.4 The Development of Industrial Management in Savonia University of Applied Sciences

The Savonia University of Applied Sciences and the West Anhui University offered the two-year double degree study of the industrial management, which provides students with the opportunities to earn a double degree in industrial management.

The curriculum of the double degree programme provides a unique combination of concentration in various fields of engineering and management. In this double degree project, Savonia offered courses, such as the energy, materials science, logistics, supply chain, purchasing measures, customer relationship management, and enterprise management. Through the study of those courses, it lets students obtain enough professional knowledge, and meanwhile, provides a convenience and flexibility of applying the knowledge to daily life and practical internship.

3.5 Development Status of Double Degree Project

In the early stage of carrying out double degree cooperation, two universities confront with problems regarding complete teaching facilities, adequate teaching staff, and college assessment criteria set. With hesitating on the special nature of international

students, school copied the huge and non-standard answers for the cooperation issues, which was determined by the project's blind and uncertain factors during the established beginning. After the settling time, the possibility of exploration helped universities to perfect the project. (Seoul, 2006)

By taking the distribution of credits about the courses in the West Anhui into account, Savonia accordingly adjusted the arrangement to the student's learning program. During the process of implementing double degree project, Savonia needs to consider the school's allocation of funds, the provisions of government regulations as well as the challenges of the employment direction with social development. These factors determined the reasonableness and necessity concerning the existence of double degree project.

Since the slowdown of Finland's economy, the government reduces the available funds to each university, which thus led to the reduction of teacher force as well as the demand of teaching equipment. Also, it was one of the reasons for the termination of cooperation in 2014. (Sintonen, 15)

Along with the reduction of student resources, students chose other professional programs according to the employment trends. Moreover, many Chinese students do not want to continue attending the double degree projects. (International cooperation between two universities, 2015)

In the initial stage, the project development stimulated high enthusiasm and cultivated the high-quality students (student study-quality). After graduation, multiple students selected to go to colleges and universities to continue pursuing master's degree. In fact, everything has two sides, because there are more an unknown variables during the period of implementing the project. Hence, terminating the project at the right time is a smart choice.

Following the end of the project, Savonia needs to pay more attention to practice-oriented learning and convert industrial management into mechanical engineering so as to avoid side effects.

3.6 Comparison between Industrial Management and Mechanical Engineering

Industrial management course combines engineering subjects with management, which is suitable for engineers. Apart from studying the basic information about engi-

neering topics, the students can learn the market and enterprise management. (Feng, 2008)

Regarding the nature of these two courses, industrial management is more based on the management and the applied disciplines. In other words, it can be regarded as a professional technology. In the factory, the role of industrial management department can be broadly divided into several parts, such as market management, logistics management and information exchange. Thus, the application of management information systems and operations research in industrial becomes particularly prominent.

The reasons why Savonia arranges mechanical engineering lies in that it is the profession utilized for the mechanical engineering industry, and the knowledge of its management is focused on various parts of the plant management, transport of materials, manufacturing, and supply chain management. Furthermore, it is not only management discipline but also a generalized mechanical discipline. (Bachelor of Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, n.d.)

The second reason is the school. Savonia is a technology and engineering school, and the mechanical engineering can take the full advantages of Savonia's equipment. Beyond that, it has multidisciplinary engineering cross-professional features; Mechanical Engineer is a good lesson.

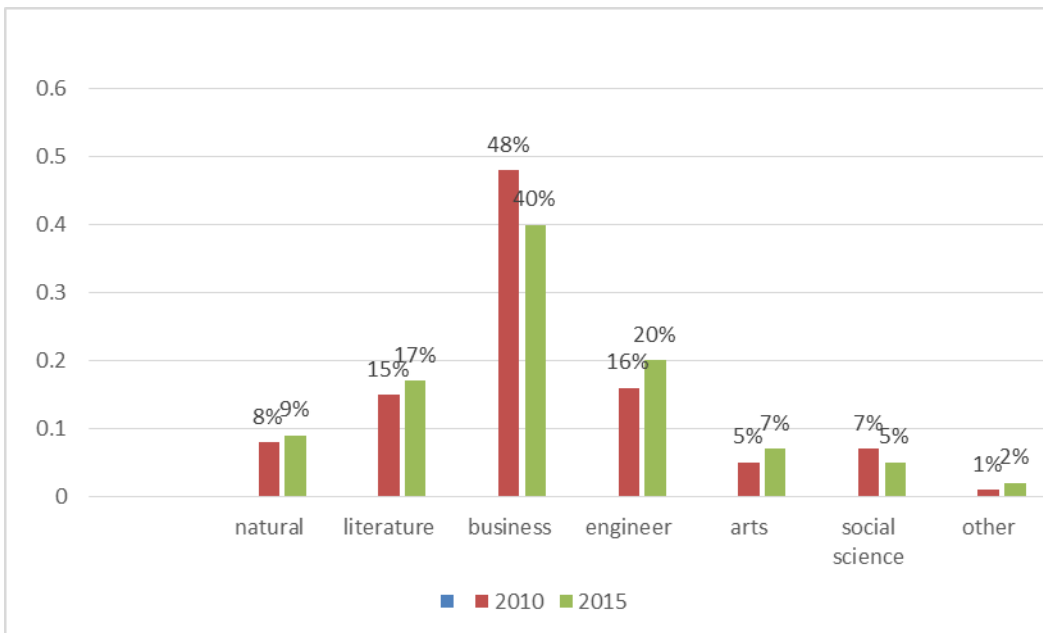


FIGURE 2. The percentage of Chinese studies in Finland in different subjects in 2010 & 2015

3.7 The Development of Mechanical Engineering in West Anhui University

The mechanical engineering of West Anhui teaches a student with the basic knowledge and application ability of mechanical design and manufacture. It involves manufacturing, technological development, applied research, operational management and sales management, and gains access to advanced and technical personnel engineering which combine engineering and management together. (West Anhui University, n.d.)

According to the requirements of this discipline, students shall learn the basic theory of mechanical design and manufacturing, fundamental knowledge of microelectronic technology, computer technology and information processing technology, and basic training of modern mechanical engineering, and possess the ability of mechanical product design, enterprise resource planning, procurement plan, manufacturing and equipment control, production organization and marketing management.

Through double-degree cooperation, West Anhui University made an arrangement toward teaching and main courses, such as engineering mechanics, mechanical design, electrical and electronic technology, microcomputer principle and application of mechanical engineering materials, manufacturing technology foundation, business management and marketing planning.

The main teaching practice includes military, metalworking, electricity, electronic practice, production practice, social practice, curriculum design and enterprise management. According to the general plan, more than 40 weeks will be arranged. Moreover, students will learn how to apply knowledge into practice, and lay the foundation for entering enterprise or further learning programs (Master's degree).

3.8 The Reasons for Picking the Two Programs for Cooperation

From the traditional viewpoint, the cooperation of the project was that Savonia University of Applied Sciences shared teaching resources with The West Anhui University, and absorbed some elements from the teaching process of Chinese universities. For example, Savonia's teaching model gave students a complete and comprehensive educational environment, and taught by various hardware facilities. In this way,

students can directly know about Savonia's teaching environment, resources and teaching style. (People's Daily Online, 2015)

Owing to the employment-oriented impact, The West Anhui University decided to focus on the development of Engineering. Considering the needs for the basic knowledge as well as the demands of students who participated in the project, their curriculum was adapted to the educational model and discipline requirements of Savonia University of Applied Sciences. Also, this was the basic reason for selecting two projects for cooperation.

The student can participate in this project and pass the entrance exam. After that, they can come into Savonia for studying. After students participated in this project, they'd better study in West Anhui University for two years, and accumulate the knowledge about engineering, materials processing, business management, chemistry, and related physical properties. Admittedly, it is essential for the students to study in Savonia.

4 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE COOPERATIONti

4.1 Purpose of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire aims to find out the significance of studying abroad for the students; what kind of school they like to apply for; which country they prefer to apply for; why they want to study abroad; what modes (exchange students or double degree student) they like to act if two schools have cooperative relationship. In this questionnaire, it is not only to find out the possibility and reason for cooperation between Savonia University of Applied Sciences and the West Anhui University, but also to explain the reasons for the cooperative relationship between these two universities.

4.2 Results of the Questionnaire

When the questionnaire was released on the Internet, we collected the answers from students. Just a few hours later, hundreds of answers were recorded. Thus, results analysis for the cooperation is reliable. (Guangjing Tang, 2015)

When students chose universities, the most important thing they considered includes the ranking of the university, application difficulty, the complexity of the application process.

Two-thirds of the students chose to be double-degree students, while the others chose to be exchange students. As for 39% of double-degree students, they would like to choose 3+1 cooperation mode (3-year study in China and 1-year study in overseas university), because these students want to try the study life in Finland for one year, rather than for two years.

Over 50% of students considered that Management and Economics major need the international cooperation project as well. Also, Social Science major was ranked in the third part. Almost everyone holds a view that laws need not study abroad, maybe the language was the most difficult problem for them.

For the students, the United Kingdom and Austria were referred to the most popular countries for studying abroad, and the third choice is an African country. There were not so many students who chose America for studying. By contrast, students choosing to study in Finland just occupied 7%.

In the choice of "Finland" students group, there were two things that led them to make this choice. The first one is that students do not need not to pay a tuition fee in Finland, and the other one is that Finnish University has cooperation project with their school.

Nearly 60% of students want to live in a medium-sized city such as Kuopio, while 30% of students prefer to live in an international city like Helsinki. However, only 10% of students want to live in a small village like Varkaus. In the note, there were students who write that he/she did not like to live in northern Finland, because the living costs are high, the weather is too cold and the winter is long there.

39% of the students considered that they could afford no tuition while 32% of students considered that they could afford 5000 euro tuition fee. However, if Finland will have a tuition fee, more students may want to choose the United Kingdom or another country for studying. 84% of students hope that their school selects a public university for cooperation, because it has lower tuition fee and high recognition degree.

As senior students know that more details about the school, have the same cultural background, and can easily make language communication, applicants prefer to obtain more campus information from senior students. As indicated by the information, if 32% of the students encounter some difficulties in study and life, they are more willing to ask them for help.

42% of students wanted to acquire learning experiences and life experiences when studying abroad, 26% of students wanted to improve their English while 18% of students wished to gain a high-grade point average to apply for a postgraduate degree. Others wanted to improve learning ability because the international school will have more chances to learn independently. About international cooperation and exchange center, students have a larger dispute of it, and it is a draw for supporter and opponent.

About the model of cooperation project, more than half of students think that it can be three years for a cycle. In the first three years, two sides will be more about under-

standing others. As for education model, education mode and contents included in their course aspects, students will know it more clearly. In the second three years, they can adjust to the project model by student feedback.

For applicants, they hoped that university can offer them in three aspects. There is specialized personnel who demonstrated for applying materials as well as making a list and reminded for the deadline of submitting materials.

When students chose to participate in an international cooperation project, they will pay more attention to the education quality, yet nearly half of students thought that it was the most important thing to consider the certain school.

Also, we asked some international students of Savonia University of Applied Sciences about the aspects of Savonia that need to be improved. They selected answers, including five aspects: cooperation way is single, and cooperative enthusiasm is not high, added course and course elective mechanism is imperfect, professional ranking is not high and exerts no influence, few companies choose to cooperate with Savonia, and offer opportunity to international students for practicing the theoretical knowledge, there are no scholarships for international students.

4.3 Analysis of the Questionnaire

According to this survey, the following areas need to be improved:

- school ranking
- market positions
- Savonia propaganda
- the setting of an international office.

4.3.1 Improving the School Ranking

Students prefer to utilize university ranking to evaluate whether the university is good or not, because the statistic is the only one thing for students to trust and observe. More than half of them would like to enter into Top 100 ranking universities and a lot of them have proved to be qualified for those prestigious colleges. There are too

many elements that affect university ranking, such as location, facility, the number of international students, academic level and amounts of cultured talents. (People's Daily Online, 2015)

Apart from these unalterable parts, Savonia University of Applied Sciences shall improve the facility of education. For instance, computers need to be upgraded to the new generation. Also, the software headed by ERP that can be utilized in the teaching needs to have English version, rather than just Finnish version. Finland is located in Northern European. Regardless of the weather and consumption level, it is not popular among students. As shown in the questionnaire, most students choose to study in Finland without tuition fee. However, the Finnish Parliament approved on December 15th, 2015 the higher education institutions to charge tuition fees from international students coming from none EU countries. The related bills will be carried into effect since the autumn semester in 2017. Higher education institutions in Finland will also set up scholarships for overseas students to help them alleviate their school fee burdens. The lowest tuition fee is 1,500 Euros per academic year. (Yle, 2016)

4.3.2 For Market Strategic Positioning

As regard to the cooperation between Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University, the mode is just 2+2 double-degree. According to the questionnaire, many students do not want to spend over one year in Finland, so the 3+1 mode is much more popular than 2+2.

For Savonia, dispatching a teacher to China for starting an elective English course to introduce Finnish culture and interesting customs could obtain more attention from the students.

4.3.3 Introduction to Savonia

The materials for Savonia brochure can be written in different languages. Savonia has cooperated with some universities in China. When Savonia staff comes to those universities for propaganda, they should prepare and give out some materials about

Savonia University of Applied Sciences. As shown, 86% of students think that Chinese materials can improve their interest in a university.

Regarding the brochure, Savonia should pay attention to “why studying in Savonia” rather than “why studying in Finland”. For example, Queen University Belfast, they introduced the living in Belfast, which includes continent transportation, the lowest cost in The United Kingdom, and quiet campus in downtown. Moreover, a video was displayed to enable applicants to see the campus in official websites.

Thus, when Savonia University of Applied Sciences makes propaganda in China, it can also display videos introducing the university by some Chinese international students.

4.3.4 International Cooperation Center

Regarding the topic of university’s international office, students have big controversy. Increasing student’s recognition has become the most significant issue. For example, Renmin University of China has an international office and a special website which covers information about university cooperation list, relational policy, procedures for application, and even details of international time and weather.

The university provides a brochure to introduce different elegant demeanours of co-operation schools and news about overseas study. Thus, students can see the results of their work day and believe the center has its work.

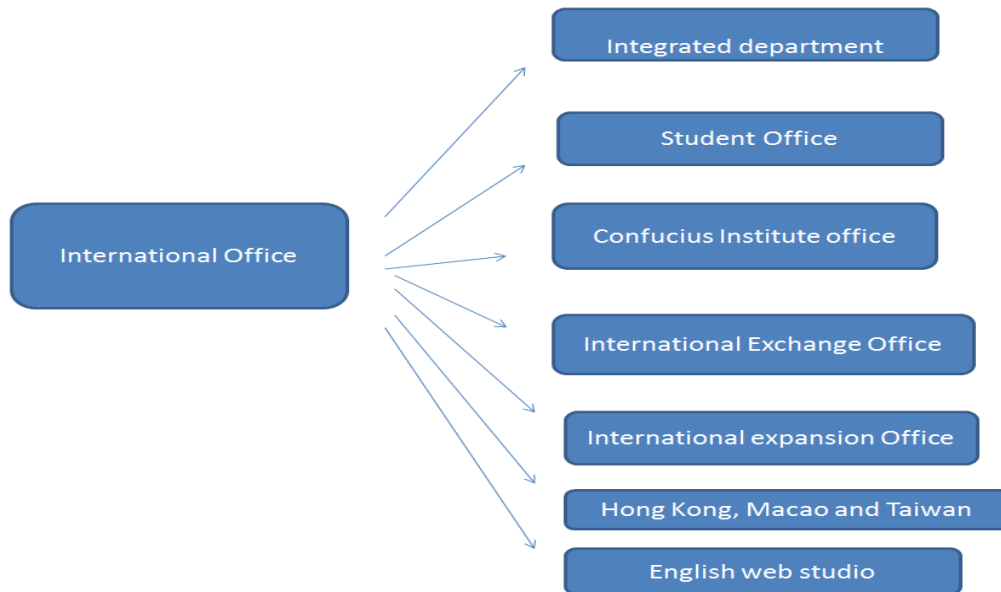


FIGURE 1. Renmin University of China, International Office Organization Chart
(Renmin University of China, International Office Organization Chart, 2015)

Table 2. Renmin University of China, International Office staff responsibilities

Office	Responsibility
Integrated department	Teacher Yang: Handle formalities for work aboard. Submit document about "foreigners visiting China declaration form"
	Teacher Diao: Solve problem about Visa, passport, currency exchange, approval and settlement
	Teacher Li: Responsible for office documents, equipment procurement and management, student assistant recruitment
Student of- fice	Teacher Du: Scholarships transactions, student visa, protect and activities
	Teacher Huang: International student enrollment, archives arrangement, issue of proof or certificate
	Teacher Zhang: Exchange students' management, admissions promotion and English translator
Confucius Institute Of- fice	Chief Lin: Go aboard to overseas Confucius Institute, to communicate and build cooperation project
	Teacher Xia: Responsible for North American and European communication, English and French translator
	Teacher Peng: Responsible for Afro-Asian, Latin America communication
International Exchange Office	Chief Zhang: Manager of the exchange office, Responsible for communication with North American and Oceania university, English translator
	Teacher Liu: Responsible for the management of foreign teachers in China, honorary professor, visiting professor management.
	Teacher Wang: Communication with Japanese university, Japanese translator
	Teacher Du: Communication with Europe, English translator
	Teacher Yuan: Communication with other Asian countries universities, English translator
International Expansion Office	Teacher Wang: Manager of international expansion office, dispatch students go abroad for communication, English translator
	Teacher Zhang: International Office website construction and routine maintenance, dispatch students go abroad for communication, English translator
Hong Kong, Marco and Taiwan	Chief Han: Building and maintenance cooperation project within Hong Kong, Marco and Taiwan, planning course on national circumstances, work in Asian Studies Center, submit common document

This picture shows each person's position, the scope of work, and membership departments. (Renmin University of China, International Office staff responsibilities Table, 2015)

5 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE COOPERATION OF DOUBLE DEGREE

5.1 Strengths of Double Degree Cooperation

During the past years, the bilateral relations between Finland and China have clearly diversified and developed into commercial and financial fields together. This can be clearly shown in the statistics.

In 2014, the financial amount of trading between Finland and China reached 6.3 billion euros. Finland has invested at least 10 billion euros in China. The number of Chinese living in Finland had already exceeded 8000 people; about a quarter of them being students. Thanks to development, the double degree cooperation with Chinese University needs be support up the government. (Embassy, 2015)

After Finnair opened Helsinki flights to four Chinese cities, it has been providing great convenience for students who want to study in Finland. In 2014, the number of Chinese international students reached 460 thousand and the increasing rate reached over 11% compared to 2013. Also, the own expense students occupied 92% of them. (Number of Chinese outbound students up by 11% in 2014, 2015)

China has become the first international student exporting country. Therefore, China is the first choice for cooperation. West Anhui University is located in Lu'an, a friendship city of Varkaus, the location where one campus of Savonia University of Applied Sciences is situated. (Twin Cities of Varkaus, 2016) It is easier to establish cooperative relations, because the government can give strong support, and meanwhile the cultural information exchange between the two cities is relatively thorough. People in two cities have a deep understanding of each other and can easily build a cooperative relationship.

According to previous friendly cooperation, Savonia collected rich experiences for the subsequent cooperation. Chinese students prefer to choose universities that have long cooperation time and relatively stable cooperative relations because the specific details can be learned from the previous students. However, Savonia has abundant cooperative experiences with West Anhui University. Thus, it will be easier to renew the contract.

Also, the double-degree participants are specific advertisements for Savonia University of Applied Sciences, providing the confidence and 'guide books' for Chinese students who want to study in Savonia. Savonia can invite a student who has completed the studies to give a speech to Chinese students. It is a particularly useful thing to attract more students to apply for Savonia University of Applied Sciences.

5.2 Weaknesses of Double Degree Cooperation

In previous cooperation, some unexpected things happened. For example, the graduation time was delayed; some students did not pass the entrance examination; and issues of conversion credits incurred. For graduated students, finding a suitable job in Finland is a very difficult thing. It directly affects whether a student can continue to take part in this project or not.

The unemployment rate in Finland increased to 9.3% in January of 2016. (Finland Unemployment Rate 1959-2016, 2016) Meanwhile, in the other Nordic countries, students are likely to find a part-time job more easily but this policy is not encouraged in Finland by social security office. A report has shown that 39 of percent students would prefer to have a short working experience in foreign countries before coming back. Considering the severe situation of work, many students choose to pursue studies in other countries. (People's Daily Online, 2015)

Finland has certain advantages about human resource management, energy efficiency, environmental protection and network security. However, industrial management does not cover interior operation. Meanwhile, Germany has an advantage in industrial management so that many students choose to apply for universities in Germany instead of Savonia University of Applied Sciences.

However, in reality, Savonia University of Applied Sciences got worldwide recognized qualification "EUR-ACE". Mechanical Engineering in Savonia University of Applied Sciences was the first European Union accredited engineering programme in Finland in 2014. There are still just two other programmes in Finland which have the same status. Therefore, the EU proves the high-level quality of teaching and operations. (Bachelor of Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, n.d.)

5.3 Opportunities for Double Degree Cooperation

A double degree is a good choice but it should not be the only one choice. It is important to open a network system for distance education and organize an activity. For example, schools should lead Chinese students to see an aurora in winter. Enhancing communication with both sides of students can be helpful for the establishment of new cooperation planning.

Savonia University of Applied Sciences has a wide scope of marketing in the world in addition to China. Sweden and Denmark share common education system and similar education environment. Exchange studies in other countries are also a good choice for students. Students do not need to transact Schengen visa. For Finland, the official languages are Finnish and Swedish. Thus, it is convenient for exchange students in Sweden.

5.4 Threats of Double Degree Cooperation

The Finnish government proposes to charge a minimum annual tuition fee of 1500€ from non-EU/EEA students, starting from August of 2017 at the latest. Among them, Finland's best university, The University of Helsinki has announced plans to introduce annual tuition fees for new students coming from outside of the EU and the European Economic Area. The fees will reach up to 25,000 euros and will come into force from August 2017. Also, Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT) announced that it will be charging 10,000-euro tuition fees from foreign students. The annual fee for foreign students in Tampere University of Technology(TUT) would fall somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 euros. In 2014, a total number of 19,880 foreign students were studying in degree programmes in Finnish institutes of higher education. Of those 19,880 foreign students, 80 % (15,984) were outside of the EU/ETA areas. (Yle, 2016)

Recently, the increasing amount of refugees flowing into Finland and European countries has caused a series of rent panic and culture conflict issues, especially for serial attacks in Paris. Most students and their parents think it is not the best choice for overseas studies.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The Reasons for the Termination of Double-Degree Project

The double degree project was terminated in 2014. Authors got the answers through the interview of Virpi Oksanen², the international coordinator of Savonia.

The reason for terminating the agreement was the reduced interest among Savonia students towards the double degree with West Anhui. One of the reasons is that West Anhui University may lack related information on professional courses taught in English. As a result, the opportunity was unrealistic to students and the balance of the agreement disappeared.

As mentioned previously, Finland's economy is in a downturn. Thus, the government has reduced the education funding and the tuition fee standards have changed. At that time, Savonia considers using the tight money focusing on the education of Finnish students.

There are many challenges during the process of double degree project. Savonia has more experience after the cooperation with West Anhui University, and it is good for the conduct of similar projects in the future.

6.2 The Characteristics of the Double Degree Project

Based on the circumstances of the project, we can conclude that the project model is featured by four characteristics:

Firstly, the China-Finland joint training worked for two years. When students transferred to the Savonia University of Applied Sciences from West Anhui University, Savonia was in charge of student's management work.

² Virpi Oksanen, She is International Coordinator (Outgoing students), Savonia University of Applied Sciences. E-mail interview. Date: 23.11. 2015.

Secondly, the curriculum is flexible. As the mechanical engineer courses and industrial management courses still have lots of common, the project is based on the Savonia side, combined with management and engineering. As a result, after two years of study in West Anhui University, students either go to Savonia or continue their study plan smoothly.

In the third place, the learning of English and professional courses should be emphasized at the same time. Students could learn basic knowledge through computer courses to adapt to the future courses of Savonia.

Fourthly, both sides have rich exchange experience. The two sides would regularly exchange teaching methods after each spring and autumn semester. The regular communication is necessary to the project participants, so that the problems will be resolved as soon as possible.

6.3 Double Degree Project Compared with Other Universities

According to the survey, the number of students participating in the double degree project is the rising trend. Most of the students are concentrated on engineering technology and international business. It is the consequence of employment trends, government policies, and partner schools' disciplines.

Comparing Savonia's model of cooperation to other schools, school propaganda is not obvious and the project has its defects. School can learn from the relevant cooperation about The West Anhui University and Salisbury University.

The project last for a semester and the main courses are English learning and American culture to help students adapt to the study life at Salisbury University. After the project students have received an official certificate and related credits, they tend to get a double degree. The project is open to all professions at different levels of English student enrollment.

6.4 Succeed in Double Degree Project

At first, there was full communication between Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University. In 2005 and 2008, West Anhui University leader had

visited Savonia University of Applied Sciences for inspection and perfect the agreement. Savonia also dispatched 18 of teachers and 10 of postgraduates to West Anhui between 2005 and 2012. (West Anhui University, 2014) It often holds some activities in both universities such as welcome party, competition in basketball, speech meeting and international weeks. Not only between both of schools, but also in students. Some of the senior Chinese schoolmates organized a communication group for junior students. It would reply some questions such as how to fly to Finland for a low price or what things must be prepared before junior students go to Finland. When junior students have gone to Finland, senior students can pick up them from airport or train station and solve some problems with their life.

Secondly, during the cooperation period, both universities have learned a lot of cooperation experiences which are the strongly practical ability. West Anhui university has founded International Education & Exchange Center, let double degree project be managed by a standardization team. They also used experience which got from cooperation with Savonia University of Applied Sciences to find many international partners and hold a various of activities such as organized students to go to Korea and American to communication, do summer internship in UK, Hong Kong and teachers pursue advanced studies in American. (West Anhui University, 2014) Savonia University of Applied Sciences has higher education partners in over 30 countries. Consequently, active and dynamic student and expert exchange is part of our everyday life, as well as working together with other universities of applied sciences in international projects. In our English fields of studies, our students represent over 20 different nationalities. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences, n.d.) International cooperation has been more process-oriented and standardized.

In the third, both of universities perfected relevant information and shown them for students on the website. In Savonia University of Applied Sciences, it is including transportation information, introduce the city of school location, accommodations situation approximate monthly costs, application key date and online registration etc. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences, 15) In West Anhui University, it has shown that information of handle with permanent residence, brochures of Savonia University of Applied Sciences, English template of West Anhui University transcripts, attendance certificate and English level certificate. Used that information, students can easily participate in double degree project.

In the last, double degree project between Savonia University of Applied Sciences and West Anhui University has cultivated 155 of excellent students until now, which can admit much duty in the future.

7 SUMMARY

This thesis aimed to analyze the pattern of cooperation, research the pros and cons of the project as well as improved the impact on the future cooperation of Savonia with other universities. Based on the SWOT analysis on this project, suggestions were also provided on four proposals for a double degree.

The questionnaire analyzed the influential factors of double bachelor's degree, such as the direction of employment, government policy, the cost of life expenses, and the type of diploma. We collected Savonia international students' views on double degree project which was also as a part of our research result.

The thesis mentioned that the cooperation model affected the willingness of students to study in Finland, as the costs of two years have frightened many students to study in Finland. Moreover, the type of degree has an effect on the place where students want to study. Savonia also needs a clear standard for cooperation partner and high-quality students need to decide the results of cooperation.

During the process of our thesis writing, we have mainly faced with the following problems: The design of survey questions needed to consider the relevant persons in charge to understand the reasons for the detailed information of the cooperation. During the process, personnel participation in the initiative is too low and some related people have already retired. However, people who have been mentioned previously in the paper have provided a lot of useful advice. The questionnaire on Google should be popularized and hence to guarantee the related personnel has a chance to see it. Due amounts of gifts will be given to them to encourage them to finish the questionnaire. Taking this opportunity, we would like to show our appreciation here, to those who finished the questionnaire.

The double degree has been very attractive to Chinese students. As a member of this project, we are very fortunate, in spite of some imperfect parts of this project. I hope Savonia can provide similar projects in the future to take preventive measures against unknown factors.

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Appendix 1: The Questionnaire Form on the Google

Title: The research on necessary for building cooperative relationship with two universities and the matter in cooperation

1. If your school has too many choices for Cooperation University, which criteria you will use? (multiple choose)
 - A. The ranking of school
 - B. The location of school(the size of country and city)
 - C. Corresponding faculty and faculty ranking
 - D. Teaching ability
 - E. Facility

- F. Application difficulty
- G. The complexity of the application process
- H. Consumption levels in that location
- I. Amount of International students
- J. School publicity and management

2. What kinds of identity you wish to use when attend an oversea university?

- A. Exchange student(short time)
- B. Double degree student(Long period)

3. If you choice to a double degree student, which cooperation way you like?

- A. 2+2
- B. 3+1
- C. 1+3
- D. Teacher go to China and teaches student
- E. Others(write it in below)

4. Which faculty is the most important to building an Internationally Cooperation project?

- A. Art and Anthropology
- B. Social Science
- C. Natural science
- D. Finance and Financial Management
- E. Medicine
- F. Management and International Trade

G. Computer Science(IT)

H. Laws

5. If you want to apply a overseas university, which location you like?

A. The United Kingdom

B. The United States

C. Austria

D. Singapore

E. Japan or Korea

F. Finland

G. Others

6. What reason for you choice a Finland University?(multiple choose)

A. No tuition

B. Schengen visa for travel

C. The cold weather in North European

D. Teaching quality of Finland

E. School cooperation project

F. The requirement of English or Finnish

7. What size city you like to study in it?

A. Small village(Example: Varkaus)

B. Medium-sized cities(Example: Kuopio)

C. Big-sized cities(Example: Helsinki)

8. How much about the most tuition and living expense you can afford?(Statistics in RMB)
- A. No tuition, 50 thousand living expense.
 - B. 50-100 thousand tuition,50 thousand living expense
 - C. 100 thousand tuition,50-100 thousand living expense
 - D. 200 thousand tuition,100 thousand living expense
 - E. Over 200 thousand tuition and over 100 thousand living expense
9. What type university you like?
- A. Public university
 - B. Private University
10. If two schools have cooperative relationship, what advantage is most important for you?
- A. Know more information about oversea university(Learn from the previous students)
 - B. Lower requirement admission
 - C. Lower tuition
 - D. High suitability faculty
 - E. See the teacher in advance
11. What do you hope to acquire by studying abroad?
- A. Learning experience and life experience when studying abroad
 - B. Got high GPA to apply a postgraduate programme
 - C. Improving English
 - D. Improving learning ability

12. It is important to establish International cooperation and exchange center or not?

- A. It is important. When two university need to resolve problems, it can improve the speed.
- B. Not important. Let students fall into two faulty. They may to pass the buck to each other.

13. How long time is suitable for cooperation project?

- A. One year to try.
- B. Three years to know each other and adjust policy.
- C. Make more stable, longer than three years.

14. What do you think the most helpful behaviour from university when students apply for it? (multiple choose)

- A. Pick from airport when students go to your country.
- B. Send material to introduce the environment of school
- C. Start a course to teach them culture and Living knowledge in university country
- D. Education quality
- E. Communication with teachers
- F. A tutor from China
- G. Remind student to prepared varies materials

15. For studying aboard, what things are you worry most?(multiple choose)

- A Attitude from family member
- B Cost of tuition and living

- C Education quality
- D Awareness of the university
- E Others

16. For Savonia University of Applied Sciences, what suggestion or objection do you have?

